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Snoqualmie Tribe

SNOQUALMIE WATERSHED FORUM

April 24, 2013

To: Representatives Rodne, Magendanz, Goodman,
Springer, Dunshee and Chopp



RE: Increase Funding for Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Funds to \$80M

The Snoqualmie Watershed Forum (Forum) appreciates your commitment to supporting efforts to clean up Puget Sound and to restore our iconic salmon populations. The inclusion of \$70M in the proposed capital budget for the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) fund is a significant demonstration of that commitment. We respectfully request that the House increase the PSAR fund to a level of \$80M, as proposed in the Governor's budget.

Our Forum is a partnership of elected officials, citizens and representatives from conservation organizations supporting salmon recovery and ecological health in the Snoqualmie and South Fork Skykomish Watersheds in King County, which together comprise 50% of the Snohomish River Basin. We have been working together since 1998 and are proud of our progress to date. As you know, despite tremendous efforts by the state, tribes, local governments and countless non-governmental partners, salmon recovery efforts are lagging way behind schedule, largely due to inadequate funding. PSAR is the most significant source of state funds that supports salmon recovery across the Puget Sound and it has funded many critical projects over the past five years.

The \$80M PSAR funding request was developed through a technically rigorous regional process that is broadly supported across the Sound. That process led to the identification of a list of top-priority projects that represent the very best actions we can take now to recover imperiled salmon habitat. The proposed Upper Carlson Restoration Project, located near Fall City along the Snoqualmie River (Legislative District 5), is the product of intensive feasibility studies and the efforts of the Forum and its partners to identify the most effective actions in the most important locations. Unfortunately, due to the way that the project list is sequenced, this project will not receive PSAR funding unless the appropriation is increased to \$80M. As a result, it will likely be delayed for one or more years until other sources of funding can be found.

Projects funded by PSAR are highly visible, high priority, and science-based actions that help implement the Puget Sound Action Agenda, the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan, and locally developed watershed-based salmon conservation plans. These labor-intensive projects have also been highly effective in creating and maintaining construction-based jobs. In tough economic times, PSAR funds are a strategic and effective investment in our local economies while simultaneously helping to restore and protect salmon habitat as well as Puget Sound.

We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to the House for the inclusion of \$33M under the Floodplain Management Local Grant program to fund a list of specific floodplain restoration efforts, including the Snoqualmie River Fall City Corridor project. Each of the projects on the Coordinated Investment for Puget Sound Floodplains list represents a multi-objective approach to funding floodplain management actions that benefit diverse activities, such as agriculture, while restoring habitat and reducing flood risks. We believe a multi-objective funding model - rather than funding activities in narrowly defined categories - holds tremendous promise, particularly in floodplains where the highest priority restoration actions often intersect with vital agricultural and commercial land uses. Unfortunately, neither the Governor's nor the Senate's capital budgets include this item. While this may represent an insurmountable hurdle in negotiations, we ask that the House emphasize its commitment to floodplain restoration by

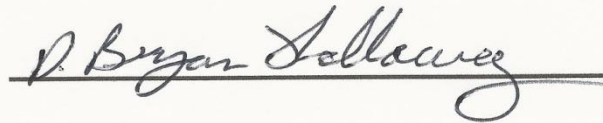
supporting an increase to PSAR as described above. Several projects on the PSAR list, including the Upper Carlson Restoration project, are exactly the types of projects envisioned for funding under the coordinated floodplain funding initiative. Moreover, we strongly urge you to support similarly coordinated multi-objective floodplain funding strategies in future legislative sessions.

In summary, we strongly encourage you to increase the funding for PSAR to \$80M to support critical salmon recovery across the Puget Sound. If you are interested in a tour of successful restoration projects in our watershed or would like more information, please contact Janne Kaje, Snoqualmie Watershed Coordinator, at (206) 205-8309 or janne.kaje@kingcounty.gov.

Sincerely,



Jason Walker - Forum Chair
City of Duvall Councilmember



Bryan Holloway – Forum Vice-Chair
City of Snoqualmie Councilmember